Numb. 43

The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

——*Bene Nummatum decorat Swadela Venuſque.* Hor.

From *Saturday July* 16. to *Tueſday July* 19. 1709.

White's Chocolate-houſe, July 18.

I Write from hence at preſent to complain, that Wit and Merit are ſo little encourag'd by People of Rank and Quality, that the Wits of the Age are oblig'd to run within *Temple-Bar* for Patronage. There is a deplorable Inſtance of this in the Caſe of Mr. *D—y*, who has dedicated his inimitable Comedy, call'd, *The Modern Prophets*, to a worthy Knight, to whom, it ſeems, he had before committed his Plan, which was, *To Ridicule the Ridiculers of our eſtabliſh'd Doctrine.* I have elſewhere celebrated the Contrivance of this excellent *Drama*; but was not, 'till I read the Dedication, wholly let into the *Religious* Deſign of it. I am afraid it has ſuffer'd Diſcountenance at this gay End of the Town, for no other Reaſon but the *Piety* of the Purpoſe. There is however in this Epiſtle the true Life of Panegyrical Performance; and I do not doubt but, if the Patron would part with it, I can help him to others with good Pretenſions to it; *viz.* of *Uncommon Underſtanding*, who would give him as much as he gave for it. I know perfectly well a Noble Perſon to whom theſe Words (which are the Body of the Panegyrick) would fit to a Hair.

Your Eaſineſs of Humour, or rather your harmonious Diſpoſition, is ſo admirably mix'd with your Compoſure, that the rugged Cares and Diſturbance that Publick Affairs brings with it, which does ſo vexatiouſly affect the Heads of other great Men of Buſineſs, &c. does ſcarce ever ruffle your unclouded Brow ſo much as with a Frown. And what above all is Praiſe-worthy, you are ſo far from thinking your ſelf better than others, that a flouriſhing and opulent Fortune, which by a certain natural Corruption in its Quality, ſeldom fails to infect other Poſſeſſors with Pride, ſeems in this Caſe as if only providentially diſpoſed to enlarge your Humility.

But I find, Sir, I am now got into a very large Field, where tho' I could with great eaſe raiſe a Number of Plants in Relation to your Merit of this plauditory Nature; yet for Fear of an Author's general Vice, and that the plain Juſtice I have done you ſhould, by my proceeding and others miſtaken Judgment, be imagin'd Flattery, a Thing the Bluntneſs of my Nature does not care to be concern'd with, and which I alſo know you abominate.

It is wonderful to ſee how many Judges of theſe fine Things ſpring up every Day by the Price of Stocks, and other elegant Methods of abridging the Way to Learning and Criticiſm. But I do hereby forbid all Dedications to all Perſons within the City of *London*, except Sir *Francis*, Sir *Stephen*, and the Bank, will take Epigrams and Epiſtles as Value receiv'd for their Notes, and the *Eaſt-India* Companies accept of Heroick Poems for their Seal'd Bonds. Upon which Bottom, our Publiſhers have full Power to treat with the City in Behalf of us Authors, to enable Traders to become Patrons and Fellows of the Royal Society, as well as receive certain Degrees of Skill in the *Latin* and *Greek* Tongues, according to the Quantity of the Commodities which they take off our Hands.

Grecian Coffee-houſe, July 18.

The Learned have ſo long labour'd under the Imputation of Dryneſs and Dulneſs in their Accounts of their Phænomena, that an ingenious Gentleman of our Society has reſolved to write a Syſtem of Philoſophy in a more lively Method, both as to the Matter and Language, than has been hitherto attempted. He read to us the Plan upon which he intends to proceed. I thought his Account, by Way of Fable of the Worlds about us, had ſo much Vivacity in it, that I could not forbear tranſcribing his Hypotheſis, to give the Reader a Taſt of my Friend's Treatiſe, which is now in the Preſs.

" The Inferior Deities having deſign'd on a Day ' to play a Game at Football, knead together a ' numberleſs Collection of dancing Atoms into the ' Form of 7 rowling Globes: And that Nature ' might be kept from a dull Inactivity, each ſe- ' parate Particle is endued with a Principle of Mo- ' tion, or a Power of Attraction, whereby all the ' ſeveral Parcels of Matter draw each other propor- ' tionably to their Magnitudes and Diſtances, into ' ſuch a remarkable Variety of different Forms, as to ' produce all the wonderful Appearances we now ' obſerve in Empire, Philoſophy, and Religion. ' To proceed; At the Beginning of the Game, each ' of the Globes being ſtruck forward with a vaſt ' Violence, ran out of Sight, and wander'd in a ' ſtraight Line through the infinite Spaces. The ' nimble Deities purſue, breathleſs almoſt, and ' ſpent in the eager Chace; each of them catch'd hold ' of one, and ſtamp'd it with his Name; as, *Saturn*, ' *Jupiter*, *Mars*, and ſo of the reſt. To prevent ' this Inconvenience for the future, the Seven are ' condemned to a Precipitation, which in our In- ' ferior Stile we call *Gravity*. Thus the Tangential ' and Centripetal Forces, by their Counter-ſtruggle, ' make the Celeſtial Bodies deſcribe an exact El- ' lipſis.

There will be added to this an Appendix, in Defence of the firſt Day of the Term according to the Oxford Almanack, *by a learned Knight of this Realm, with an Apology for the ſaid Knight's Manner of Dreſs; proving, That his Habit, according to this Hypotheſis, is the true* Modern *and* Faſhionable; *and that Buckles are not to be worn, according to this Syſtem, 'till the* 10th *of* March, *in the Year* 1714. *which, according to the Computation of ſome of our greateſt Divines, is to be the firſt Year of the* Millennium; *in which bleſſed Age, all Habits will be reduc'd to a primitive Simplicity; and whoever ſhall be found to have perſever'd in a Conſtancy of Dreſs, in Spight of all the Allurements of prophane and heathen Habits, ſhall be rewarded with a never-fading Doublet of a Thouſand Years. All Points in the Syſtem which are doubted, ſhall be atteſted by the Knight's Extemporary Oath, for the Satisfaction of his Readers.*

Will's Coffee-houſe, July 18.

We were upon the Heroick Strain this Evening, and the Queſtion was, What is the True Sublime? Many very good Diſcourſes happen'd thereupon; after which a Gentleman at the Table, who is, it

ſeems,

ſeems, writing on that Subject, aſſum'd the Argument; and tho' he ran thro' many Inſtances of Sublimity from the ancient Writers, ſaid, He had hardly known an Occaſion wherein the true Greatneſs of Soul, which animates a General in Action, is ſo well repreſented, with Regard to the Perſon of whom it was ſpoken, and the Time in which it was writ, as in a few Lines in a modern Poem: There is (continued he) nothing ſo forc'd and conſtrain'd as what we frequently meet with in Tragedies; to make a Man under the Weight of a great Sorrow, or full of Meditation upon what he is ſoon to execute, caſt about for a Simile to what he himſelf is, or the Thing which he is going to act: But there is nothing more proper and natural than for a Poet, whoſe Buſineſs is to deſcribe, and who is Spectator of one in that Circumſtance when his Mind is working upon a great Image, and that the Idea's hurry upon his Imagination; I ſay, there is nothing ſo natural, as for a Poet to relieve and clear himſelf from the Burthen of Thought at that Time, by uttering his Conception in Simile and Metaphor. The higheſt Act of the Mind of Man is to poſſeſs it ſelf with Tranquility in imminent Danger, and to have its Thoughts ſo free as to act at that Time without Perplexity. The ancient Poets have compar'd this ſedate Courage to a Rock that remains immovable amidſt the Rage of Winds and Waves; but that is too ſtupid and inanimate a Similitude, and could do no Credit to the Heroe. At other Times they are all of 'em wonderfully oblig'd to a *Lybian* Lion, which may give indeed very agreeable Terrors to a Deſcription; but is no Compliment to the Perſon to whom it is applied: Eagles, Tygers, and Wolves, are made Uſe of on the ſame Occaſion, and very often with much Beauty; but this is ſtill an Honour done to the Brute rather than the Heroe. *Mars*, *Pallas*, *Bacchus*, and *Hercules*, have each of them furniſh'd very good Similes in their Time, and made, doubtleſs, a greater Impreſſion on the Mind of a Heathen, than they have on that of a modern Reader. But the Sublime Image that I am talking of, and which I really think as great as ever enter'd into the Thought of Man, is in the Poem call'd, *The Campaign*; where the Simile of a miniſtring Angel ſets forth the moſt ſedate and the moſt active Courage engag'd in an Uproar of Nature, a Confuſion of Elements, and a Scene of Divine Vengeance. Add to all, That theſe Lines compliment the General and his Queen at the ſame Time, and has all the natural Horrors, heighten'd by the Image that was ſtill freſh in the Mind of every Reader.

'Twas then Great Marlbro's *mighty Soul was prov'd,*
That, in the Shock of charging Hoſts unmov'd,
Amidſt Confuſion, Horror, and Deſpair,
Examin'd all the dreadful Scenes of War;
In peaceful Thought the Field of Death ſurvey'd,
To fainting Squadrons ſent the timely Aid,
Inſpir'd repuls'd Battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful Battle where to rage.
So when an Angel by Divine Command,
With riſing Tempeſts ſhakes a guilty Land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia *paſt,*
Calm and Serene he drives the furious Blaſt;
And, pleas'd th' Almighty's Orders to perform,
Rides in the Whirl-wind, and directs the Storm.

The whole Poem is ſo exquiſitely Noble and Poetick, that I think it an Honour to our Nation and Language. The Gentleman concluded his Critick on this Work, by ſaying, that he eſteem'd it wholly new, and a wonderful Attempt to keep up the ordinary Idea's of a March of an Army, juſt as they happen'd in ſo warm and great a Stile, and yet be at once Familiar and Heroick. Such a Performance is a Chronicle as well as a Poem, and will preſerve the Memory of our Heroe, when all the Edifices and Statues erected to his Honour are blended with common Duſt.

St. James's Coffee-houſe, July 18.

Letters from the *Hague* of the 23d Inſtant, *N. S.* ſay, That the Allies were ſo forward in the Siege of *Tournay*, that they were preparing for a general Aſſault, which, it was ſuppos'd, would be made within a few Days. Deſerters from the Town gave an Account, That the Gariſon was carrying their Ammunition and Proviſions into the Citadel, which occaſion'd a Tumult among the Inhabitants of the Town. The *French* Army had laid Bridges over the *Scarp*, and made a Motion as if they intended to paſs that River; but tho' they are join'd by the Reinforcement expected from *Germany*, it was not believ'd they would make any Attempt towards relieving *Tournay*. Letters from *Brabant* ſay, there has been a Diſcovery made of a Deſign to deliver up *Antwerp* to the Enemy. The States of *Holland* have agreed to a general Naturalization of all Proteſtants who ſhall fly into their Dominions; to which Purpoſe, a Proclamation was to be iſſued within few Days.

They write from *France*, That the great Miſery and Want under which that Nation has ſo long labour'd, has ended in a Peſtilence, which began to appear in *Burgundy* and *Dauphine*. They add, that in the Town of *Macon*, Three Hundred Perſons had died in the Space of Ten Days. Letters from *Liſle* of the 24th Inſtant adviſe, That great Numbers of Deſerters came daily into that City, the moſt Part of whom are Dragoons. Letters from *France* ſay, That the *Loire* having overflow'd its Banks, hath laid the Country under Water for 300 Miles together.

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